

## Message Text

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ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 VO-03 SCA-01 JUSE-00 EB-07

COME-00 DHA-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

DODE-00 SP-02 SSO-00 INRE-00 /037 W

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O 020700Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3535

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 0726

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CVIS, EAID, SA

SUBJECT: SAUDI VISA REGULATIONS

REF: (A) STATE 400, (B) STATE 19329

1. WE REGRET THAT WE WILL NOT HAVE A RESPONSE BY FEBRUARY 2 TO OUR REQUEST THAT THE SAG INFORM US OF THE AUTHENTICITY AND CURRENT APPLICABILITY OF THE 1950 MINISTRY OF FINANCE CIRCULAR CITED REF A. DESPITE OUR EFFORTS TO HAVE THIS TREATED AS A MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL IMPORTANCE, IT SEEMS TO HAVE BECOME MIREN IN THE SAUDI BUREAUCRACY.

2. ON FEBRUARY 1 WE RAISED THE MATTER AGAIN WITH THE DIRECTOR OF WESTERN AFFAIRS AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AMBASSADOR NURI IBRAHIM AND REITERATED OUR HOPE THAT WE COULD HAVE AN EARLY RESPONSE. HE SAID THAT THE DOCUMENT WE HAD GIVEN HIM PURPORTS TO BE A MORE THAN QUARTER CENTURY OLD CIRCULAR FROM A MINISTRY WHICH NO LONGER EXISTS IN ITS PRESENT FORM, RESPONSIBILITY FOR PETROLEUM MATTERS HAVING BEEN LONG VESTED IN A SEPARATE MINISTRY. THE QUESTION OF THE DOCUMENT'S ORIGINAL AUTHENTICITY HAS THEREFORE BEEN DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE. NURI SAID THAT OUR REQUEST AS REGARDS THE MORE IMPORTANT QUESTION OF WHETHER THE DOCUMENT REFLECTS CURRENT SAUDI VISA POLICY HAD BEEN TURNED OVER TO THE CHIEF OF THE MINISTRY'S CONSULAR AFFAIRS

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DEPARTMENT FOR REPLY. AMB IBRAHIM SAID THAT HE IS A NICE

MAN BUT INDECISIVE AND AFRAID TO PUT HIS NAME TO A DEFINITIVE STATEMENT ON SUCH A SENSITIVE ISSUE AS VISA POLICY.

3. WE TOLD AMB IBRAHIM THAT IT WAS OUR UNDERSTANDING FROM WHAT WE HAD BEEN TOLD BY VARIOUS SAUDI OFFICIALS THAT THE DOCUMENT DID NOT REFLECT OFFICIAL CURRENT SAUDI VISA POLICY. WE CITED AS A RECENT PUBLIC EXAMPLE THE STATEMENT MADE BY AMB ALIREZA IN HIS REPLY TO ALLEGATIONS BY CALIFORNIA OFFICIALS THAT SAUDI ARABIA DISCRIMINATES AGAINST BLACKS, WOMEN AND JEWS. IF, AS WE WERE LED TO BELIEVE, THE 1950 DOCUMENT DID NOT REFLECT CURRENT POLICY COULD NOT THE SAG OFFICIALLY INFORM US OF THAT FACT? AMB IMRAHIM SAID THAT HE WOULD TRY TO GET A RESPONSE FOR US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE REPLY WOULD PROBABLY REQUIRE THE APPROVAL OF PRINCE SAUD WHO IS CURRENTLY OUT OF THE COUNTRY ON A MISSION TO NORTH AFRICA BUT WHO IS EXPECTED BACK SHORTLY. PARA 4. COMMENT: IN THE MEAN-

TIME, WE SHOULD LOOK TO AMBASSADOR ALIREZA'S STATEMENT AS THE MOST RECENT PRONOUNCEMENT ON THE SUBJECT. AMBASSADOR IBRAHIM SAID THIS STATEMENT ISSUED ON BASIS OF AGREED GUIDELINES. PORTER

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